

Monthly eMagazine of Vedanta Ashram & Mission

Vedanta Sandesh



Year 27

Apr 2022

Issue 10

Cover Page



The cover page of Apr 2022 issue of Vedanta Sandesh is a crystal clear profile photo of the shy & colorful 'Indian Pitta'. It is locally called as Navrang, meaning the nine-colored bird. Its scientific name is *Pitta brachyura*.

This bird has long, strong legs and a stout bill, a buffy crown with a black stripe in the middle, a black eye-stripe, and buffy underparts with bright red on the vent. Upperparts are green, with a blue shoulder patch. It is usually seen foraging on forest floors with thick undergrowth, catching insects in leaf litter. This bird is vocal, giving its characteristic two-noted whistle call at dusk and dawn. Indian Pitta is native to the Indian subcontinent. It breeds in the forests of the Himalayas, hills of central and western India, and migrates to other parts of the peninsula in winter.

Getting an opportunity to see & hear it in the shrubby forests is indeed a wow experience and thus is an Avian Vibhooti, that which spontaneously makes us remember their awesome divine creator.

Om Tat Sat

S T A R T I N G S



Vedanta Sandesh

Apr 2022



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सर्वदा स्थापनं बुद्धेः
शुद्धे ब्रह्मणि सर्वथा।
तत्समाधानमित्युक्तः
न तु चित्तस्य लालनम्।।

Samadhana is that capacity of resolution wherein because of the wisdom the mind can constantly be aware of the vivek of truth & untruth, inspite of being in any situation, and therefore there are no vacillations of mind because of any indecisiveness.

Vivekachoodamani - 26





Message from Poojya Guruji

ENDING OF KARMA-BANDHAN



One of the big blessing of Atma-Gyana is the ending of the Karma-bandhan or the bondage of Karma. There is no other way to get out of this helpless vortex. What is this Karma-bandhan? Let us briefly go into it.

Firstly, the positive side of Karma. The capacity to do Karma is a special privilege of human beings. Manushya-yoni is called Karma-yoni,

“Karma-bandhan is getting into an unending & helpless vortex of karma & karma-phala leading to yet another karma.”



Ending of Karma-bandhan

rest all are Bhoga-yoni, to just exhaust their old karmas, they are all programmed beings, while humans can do something new & creative. Karma means capacity to deliberately & consciously do actions - a response to either change a situation or create something new. Karma is not an unconscious or mechanical response, but something deliberate. Obviously this special capacity to express or

“Karma is not just any action, but is a conscious & deliberate action with complete freedom of response.”

respond should never be a problem. Problem is when we lose our freedom to act, and become conditioned and programmed to helplessly and endlessly act. This is when the situations become so important that we lose our thoughtfulness, and are buffeted by these extraneous situations to become happy or sad - then obviously the things & perceptions have



Ending of Karma-bandhan

taken a change for the worse. We become like a football in the hand of situations and people to be kicked around as per their whims & fancies. This is when we have this so called Karma-bandhan.

“Vasana are impressions left after an experience to either repeat it, or become averse to it.”

As seen above, the capacity & potential to do karma is not a problem, but the attitude and motivation with which it is done is the cause to make karma an instrument to either get more & more entangled and generate new vasana's, or retain our freedom and cleanse our minds of various earlier vasana's. It is all about these vasana's, either we get rid of them or accumulate more of these things. What are vasana's? Vasana are impressions left after an experience to either repeat it, or maybe become averse to them



Ending of Karma-bandhan

so as to avoid such situations hereafter. When responses are controlled by impressions, then to that extent our discretion to evaluate a situation and respond to it freely & intelligently is diluted or is even gone. Thereafter there is a helpless fall and endless flow. We become weak and bound. This is Karma-bandhan.

“**V**asanas dilute our freedom to act, or may even take it away.”

However, there is a way out from this helpless situation. If we really wish we can reverse this Karma-bandhan. Even though for a person who has slowly lost his/her power and confidence to think and act as per his convictions, yet if the pains of dependency and stresses are really intense, then definitely one can resolve to think and respond in a different way - in the same situations. Nothing needs to change outside, just our thinking and response.



Ending of Karma-bandhan

Earlier everything we did was to get something, however, now, we need to give and not to get. That's all. This is a fundamental paradigm shift which can redeem our freedom, sanity and humaneness. This is easier said than done. A person who has lived like a beggar throughout his/her life will find it very difficult to turn the tables. Yet this is the only way. Faith of ones completeness and divinity is the beginning of the process of the redemption of our freedom. From beggar to a giver - is the way to go.

“If we really wish, this Karma-bandhan can be reversed - just by changing our thinking.”

Every person needs to act in their respective field of interest, selflessly - this purges the earlier vasana's. If we can retain our balance in every situation and not react as per our earlier conditionings but rather think and respond as per our new found wisdom, then we do not accumulate new vasana's. This new found wisdom



Ending of Karma-bandhan

is basically all about living either to get or to give. Living to get means we are small, and living to give means we are big. This deep-rooted sraddha in our bigness or smallness is at the root of transformation. Freedom starts in our field of karma itself. We should not strive for freedom from actions, but freedom in action, while doing actions. This is why Bhagwat Geeta advises us to not leave our field of karma, however painful it may be. With such an understanding and art of living there is no Karma-bandhan.

Om Tat Sat



A tiger with orange fur and black stripes is roaring in a forest. Its mouth is wide open, showing its teeth and tongue. The background consists of tree trunks and dry ground.

रुसं हि एवायं
लब्ध्वाढी भवति ।



SADHANA
PANCHAKAM

Swamini Samatananda

Sadhana Panchakam



- : 31 : -

एकान्ते सुखमास्यताम्

Be at home - in solitude.

SADHANA PANCHAKAM



From verse 4 of Sadhana Panchakam onwards, the revered Acharya gave us various tips for facilitating abidance in Self. Tips that focussed on our mental attitudes as well as our interactions in the outside world. The fact that these tips were not given earlier shows, that they are more of a priority for a Sannyasi who has already done shravana and manan, and now needs to focus on assimilating the



Sadhana Panchakam

knowledge in every situation. If one wishes to traverse the journey inwards then it is extremely important to see the significance of these practises and live them. Thus the Acharya further goes on to say that one should definitely learn to comfortably live in solitude.

“Solitude is the state of being alone,
never lonely.”

Ekaante sukham aasyataam: *Be at home in solitude.*

‘Solitude’ is a state of being with one Self. Alone, not lonely. Often one sees that it is extremely difficult for a person to stay alone with one self even for a short while. At times when we are so-called ‘alone’ we are so dependent on various kinds of company like a mobile phone, music, a book, revelling in one’s likes and dislikes and so on, that the very idea of being in solitude is lost. But at the end of the day

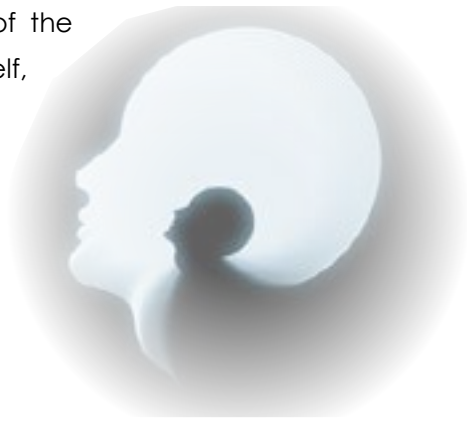


Sadhana Panchakam

these are all things and experiences which will come and go, making us more & more dependent on them.

“Habitually & helplessly thinking of someone & something increases our attachment & dependence for it..”

But for a Sannyasi If one has, very well, practised the above-mentioned sadhanas then revelling in ekanta will be like a duck taking to water. Here is a Sannyasi who has intensely studied the outside world and is thoroughly convinced about its illusory and ephemeral nature. He has gained enough momentum to now take off for the inward journey of the state of Brahman. Ishvara resides in the core of the heart as the very Self, the Atma.



Sadhana Panchakam

The word 'ekaant' or 'solitude' has two different connotations here as we try to understand the implication of this sadhana. Firstly as the word suggests 'ekante' means to revel in solitude. 'Solitude' per se may bring about some very romantic ideas in the mind of a person with being all alone in some cave etc deep in some forest or mountains, of course with all comforts, like right temperature, soft cool breeze flowing, with the gurgle of a river nearby, a kutiya to live in, and meditating like Lord Shiva on Mout Kailasha. Such are the various romantic ideas of solitude. While initially some comfort zone is helpful & required, but that is not what real solitude is all about.

“Solitude is not to be in a place free from problems or some people.”

Surely initially 'ekaant' or 'solitude' is to move away from the hustle and bustle of the habitat around and go to a quite place, in order to



Sadhana Panchakam

establish a firm awareness of being what we basically are - non-dual, self-effulgent, & blissful existence. To learn to effortlessly revel in a state of that light of consciousness that enlivens everything. To be in the blissful nature of the Self and finally glide into the state of samadhi - just being oneself.

“ Real ekanta is to revel in the ek - one. ”

The need for ekanta is basically driven by the wish to effortlessly revel in being what one truly is. Thus the real meaning of Ekanta is to revel in one. 'Ek' means one and 'ante' is the strong conviction that this alone is the truth. This state of 'being' which not only transcends all but also embraces all. A creation, a jagat where in there appears to be duality, a diversity of names and forms. To discover the true meaning of 'Ekaant' amidst the diversity of the jagat is truly discovering the meaning of 'ekaanta'. To discover the 'one without a second' in and



Sadhana Panchakam

through the multiplicity of the jagat is revelling in the 'Oneness'. This non-dual nature is of the 'Self' alone. Thus the Self is the atma of one and all. I am 'Sarvaatma'. To see everything as my very Self is revelling in ekaanta.

The state of 'Sarvaatma' is to see the 'Self' in everything living and non-living. I alone am the blue sky, the trees, the animals, the river flowing, the various people around me, all that as though appears to be separate from me is my very own self manifesting in different forms. I alone am manifesting as the small and big waves shimmering in the light of consciousness. Thus if there are no names and forms separate from me there is no experiencer, object of experience and experience. There is no division of drsihta, drishya and darshan.

If one aims to be self-contented then one must awake in this state of 'sarvaatma'. This is true 'ekaanta'-'solitude'. Revelling in the one non-dual Self.



Sadhana Panchakam

Until a person does not awake in this state of sarvaatma one will continue to identify with the body as the atma and all those connected with the body will be mine. There will be a flux of 'Me' & 'Mine' which is a state of samsara born of ignorance and misapprehesion.

But a Sannyasi in the true sense awakens and lives in this state of sarvaatma and that is true ekaanta for him.



VIBHOOTI DARSHAN



Mail from Poojya Guruji

Q: How is the death of a Brahma-gyani different from the death of an agyani jiva?



MAIL FORM POOJYA GURUJI

Har Om.

Death implies that a physical body of a living person becomes lifeless, and is thereafter not available for any vyavahar. The breathing and the activities of all vital organs stop functioning. Basically the prana stops and we say that 'prana nikal gaye' - the body has be-

“Physical death is same for both a gyani and an agyani, the real difference is in their state of minds.”



Mail from Poojya Guruji

come lifeless. Such a person is no longer available for any response or interactions. Leaving everything and everyone, that manifested entity is no longer available in this realm of existence. Thereafter the last rites too will have to be performed for both - whether it is cremation or burial. The physical body will have to be taken care as per their traditions & culture. From this point of view the death of both a gyani or an agyani is very similar.

The real difference in both of them is at the level of their minds. In the case of an agyani Jiva, the ignorant person, the world was very much real, and comprised of various near & dear ones. The person liked various things, was maybe dearly attached to many people or things, and there were many things which he/she disliked, so avoided them. Even the very thought of them brought bad mood. They avoid all



Mail from Poojya Guruji

this they wish to think of their respective Gods, or Guru, or their near & dear ones, and would even love to see them for the last time before they go to that deep-deep sleep called death. Leaving someone you dearly loved & cherished - for ever, obviously cannot be a non-event. However quiet they may remain at the time of their death, they have to leave with a heavy heart. They will experience profound loneliness, and that is something they never exposed themselves to throughout their

“A person who always lived attached to something or the other, shall always die with a heavy heart full of insecurities.”

lives. Attachment basically implies that - I am complete only with someone or something. So anyone who dies only with this perception that 'I am a limited person and will become complete only in the company of someone', shall definitely leave this world with a heavy heart



Mail from Poojya Guruji

- insecure, lonely and lost. Their dreams & aspirations also still remain, there are always the possibilities of attaining something still higher in their respective fields. That's the truth of living in the limited realm. Their karma-list still remains and therefore there shall be continuity of their existence - as a jiva.

In the case of a Brahma-gyani, the mind is not only completely quiet, but really speaking there is no mind, they have basically transcended the mind. Tattva gyana is basically all about our perceptions about the seer and the seen. The seer is not seen as a limited manifestation of life, but as the infinite, non-dual, timeless life principle. That which is 'seen' is appreciated as a changing & ephemeral realm, in which we ourselves imposed likes or dislikes and thereafter hang on to something or avoid others. Only those people who still take the realm of 'seen' as real, have likes & dislikes towards them and thereafter respond

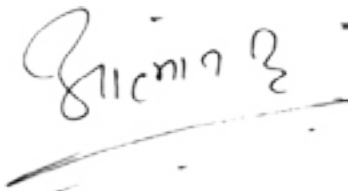


Mail from Poojya Guruji

with either joys of sorrows. In the case of a Brahma-gyani none of these things are there. The truth of the 'seen world has been seen and therefore stands negated. Their fulfillment does not depend on anything extraneous, but on their own divine truth. They are contended in themselves by themselves. In such people the time comes to a stop and they have woken into something permanent - as their own self.

All karmas - Sanchit, Agami and Pararabdha have been exhausted or negated in the case of a Brahma-gyani. A wise person has intelligently handled all of them in such a way that none remains much before the fall of the body. In the case of a Jiva they had an opportunity but their karmas could not be exhausted but have rather increased. This is basically the difference. One leaves the body with complete contentment and realization of being immortal, while the other leaves this world still craving for more. One who still has dreams alone shall transmigrate to take up yet another mortal coil to continue their pursuits.

Love & Om,



Guruji



Gita Reflections

Gita Ch. 2 Sloka 65

Swamini Samatananda

Gita Reflections

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशुः बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

(Gita Ch 2 / Shloka 65)

When the mind is tranquil destruction of all pain
and sorrow is born (happens) because the
knowledge of one who is tranquil-minded soon
becomes well established.

(Gita Ch 2 / Shloka 65)



GITA REFLECTIONS



A Yogi having discovered the futility of objective desires and thus whose sense organs and mind are under control, who is free from individual likes and dislikes. He is blessed by the prasada of samatvam, of tranquillity. Here in the following sloka Sri Krishna points out the blessings of such an equanimous mind.



Gita Reflections

Prasaade sarva dukkhanaam haanihi asya upajaayate:

Prasaada generally refers to the prasaada we receive from the temple, but here the implication of 'prasaada' is being blessed with a pleasant, satisfied & an equanimous mind. Samatvam borne out of fundamental wisdom.

“Prasaad is basically pleasantness of mind.”

What is the blessing of such an equanimous mind? Here Sri Krishna says, sarva dukkhanaam haanihi i.e. it destroys all sorrows. 'Sorrow' per se is not different with respect to time, place, and people. A person who has lost his wife will feel the same sorrow as compared to a person who has lost his money but the sources of sorrow may be different and therefore it is said 'All sorrows', sarva dukhanaam. It envelops the three kinds of dukha as classified in the



Gita Reflections



Vedic scriptures. Adhi bhautik, Adhi daivika and Adhyaatmic. Adhi bhautik is sorrow experienced due to some materialistic reason, adhi daivika due to the will of devatas or adhyatmik due to one's own ignorance and delusion.

One must understand that life will always offer convenient and inconvenient situations. Thus freedom from sorrow does not mean the absence of inconvenient situations, but it means that all such situations will not be painful for a person with an enlightened mind. A person whose mind is balanced and thoughtful is unaffected by the situation. Thus an enlightened and balanced mind is free from all sorrows.

“Sorrows are not objective realities, but subjective reactions.”



Gita Reflections

All sorrows are a product of individual expectations, individual likes and dislikes. When our likes and dislikes become our masters we are ready to dance to the tunes of 'I like' and 'I don't like'. The mind is more often agitated and at discomfort with the Self. Pain and suffering for such a one are inevitable. Having realized this, a Yogi becomes the master of his desires and goes on to conquer his individual likes and dislikes. He practises that which is dharma, and abstains from adharma. This is the blessing of a balanced mind.

“A wise man realizes that we alone are creators of joys & sorrows.”

Prasanna chetaso hyaashu buddhiih paryavafishthate:

When the mind is contended & equanimous then the Self-knowledge that has been ac-



Gita Reflections

quired gets well-assimilated and well established. Just as on eating food one makes sure that we eat the right amount of food so also it is equally important that the food is well assimilated in the body. If we eat the right amount of food but the food is not assimilated equally well, then the consumed food is not going to nourish the body. Similarly, it is only the blessing of a wise & tranquil mind that all the knowledge that has been acquired truly blesses us. Or else, we may study a lot of scriptures, do a lot of shraavan but the knowledge acquired fails to bless us in situations to come. All the knowledge goes on to become an intellectual appreciation. Therefore, it is highly important that knowledge acquired becomes a subjective realization, and thus the great importance of an equipoised mind.



VIBHOOTI DARSHAN





P.P. Gurudev
Swami Chinmayanandaji

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The Art Of Man Making
Hope For All



THE ART OF MAN MAKING

If a philosophy of life is intellectually attractive but too high for anyone to live, it becomes a Utopian dream, and not a practical way of life. Our Aryan forefathers had no patience with idealism that is not rooted in realism – that is not practical enough to live in life. The Rishis were not mere idealists and poets trying to escape from the problems of life into some misty haven of fancied perfections and imagined glories. They were athirst to live the



The Art of Man Making

highest life of harmony, peace and beauty,
of achievements and service to the world. As

“Rishis were not mere idealists but were enthused to live the highest life of harmony & peace along with service to the world.”

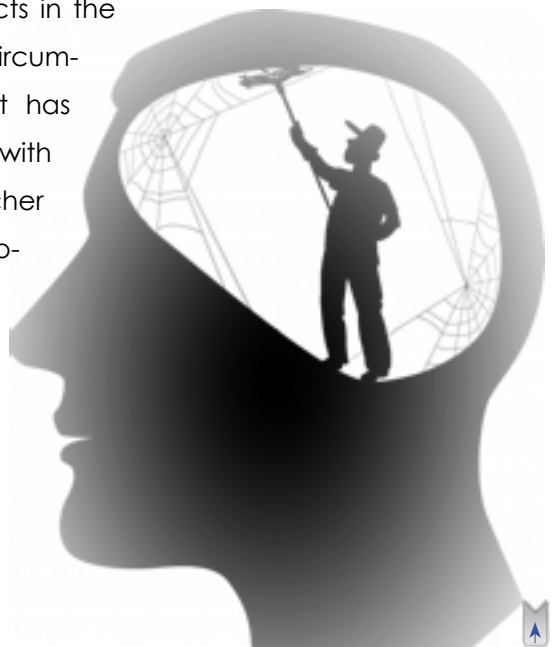
such the way of life described as “a life of intense activities undertaken in the yagya spirit”, though it may look a bit far-fetched and beyond the reach of all, Krishna labours here to assure Arjuna, that it is an easy and practical philosophy of co-operative activities which anyone with Intelligence and courage can fully understand and richly live. In all “co-operative endeavours in the field of material wealth”, (dravya yagya) the core of success lies in the inspiration of the common vision and in the intensity of individual dedication (Gyan Yagya). Therefore, this mental and intellectual preparedness is more important and sacred



The Art of Man Making

than actual physical team-work (Shreyaan dravyamayaat yagyat gyan yagya paran-tapah). For all selfish actions, promoted by personal desires (sarva karmakhilam parth) end in the wisdom of the Higher (gyane paris-amaapyate).

Naturally this knowledge of the Higher (gyanam) becomes of Supreme importance to each one of us. This can be known only through a teacher who is living it. By attuning ourselves to him alone can we intuitively come to realise how he feels and acts in the world of ever changing circumstances. When a student has attained full attunement with his teacher, then the teacher transfers this deep and profound vision to the student (upadekshyanti te gyanam gyaninah tat-



The Art of Man Making

tvadarshinah). This is the knowledge by comprehending which all our confusions end, and we never more re-enter the self created hell of sorrows caused by the ego and its endless baser passions.

It is an observable law of nature that sorrows gather a greater poignancy when they come to us and become our personal tragedies. A cosmic problem is no problem at all when compared to a world problem. But a world problem dwindles into insignificance when it is compared with a national disaster. A world war is almost nothing compared to a disastrous earthquake in one's own country! Again, a treacherous 'flood' in one part

“The more we expand our ego, the less painful is a tragedy happening to us..”



The Art of Man Making

of the country is not as serious to as a 'riot' in our own town. This 'riot' is something we overlook when there is a 'domestic tragedy' in the family. In fact, the most poignant sorrows are our own individual personal losses and inner emotional tensions.

“Once you have woken up, all the crimes committed in your dream are automatically excused; so awake by rising above the ego sense”

In short, the more we expand our ego, in our sincere identifications with the world of things and beings, the less painful is a tragedy happening to us-consequently, more becomes are own equipoise and balance. End the ego and live the blisful life of fruitful activities in the world. When one cultivates love for the entire world, he shall feel his own oneness with the universe. He then comes to perceive the entire life clothed in the Divine Light of the self:



The Art of Man Making

in an enchanting ecstatic embrace of all in the one infinite Self, the Lord (yena bhutanyas-heshena drakshasyaat manyathomai).

At this juncture, an ordinary man of the world may come to feel diffident to come to this spiritual way of life only because of the very glory and beauty of this nobelist state of living. He hesitates, doubts, despares whether he can ever enter the portals of the Lord's palace. The lord consoles every such pessimistic and confidently declares *Even if you be the most sinful among the sinful yet by the raft of knowledge, you shall indeed go across all sin. We are acutely conscious of our imperfections, and often we refuse to



The Art of Man Making

strive because we lack confidence in our own ability and strength. The lord here encourages man, “even if you are the most sinful among all sinners (api chedasi paapebhyah sarvebhyah paap krittamah), there is yet hope for you. Wake up! Come to live the larger awareness divine. When once you have woken up, all the crimes committed in your dream are automatically excused; awake and rise above the ego sense. “By the boat of knowledge you shall, indeed, go across all sins”, (sarvam gyanaplavenaiva vrijinam santarishyasi) But after all, one has to suffer the consequenc-

“Selfless actions help in vasana-purgation.”

es of what one has already perpetrated in the ignorant past. The eternal justice must be satisfied. All these words in the Shastras can only be idle consolations to the sinners. If not, then



The Art of Man Making

the law of Karma is disobeyed-flouted. Thus, some intelligent students may argue. Krishna anticipates them and announces, As blazing fire reduces wood to ashes, so to, Arjuna, does the fire of knowledge reduce all karmas to ashes. The term Karma here is used to indicate the Vasanas left over by the selfish, desire-prompted actions of the past. These Vasanas tickle new actions producing Joy or sorrow to the individual according to the quality of the Vasanas – good or bad.

Bad Vasanas are called “sins”, when we contrast them with good Vasanas. But even the best of Vasanas is also sorrow breeding “sin”, when it is compared with the Infinite Bliss, which is the nature of the divine self in us. “Just as wood is reduced by fire to ashes” (yatha idhamsi samiddhognirbhasmasaat kurute Arjuna), so are all karmas (Vasanas) reduced to ashes by the fire of knowledge. Actions done



The Art of Man Making

in dreams can not carry over to heal a result in the waking state. Similarly, "sins", gathered in the egocentric state of existence cannot reach the state of Pure Self. The "dreamer" must suffer the consequences. On waking up, there is no more the "dreamer", and it is not the law of Karma that for the sins of the "dreamer", the waker should suffer.

Similarly, the ego did commit sins, and the ego must suffer their consequences. But in the "Awakened", the ego ends – the Self alone is. Hence, the Lord announces that in the state of wisdom, the "sins" of the past are all burnt up and they can no longer provide any more dualistic experiences. There is hope even for the worst of us.



Jivanmukta

Wandering In Himalayas

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Khocharnath

Excerpts from the Travel Memoirs of
Param Poojya
Swami Tapovanji Maharaj

JIVANMUKTA

The Hindus as well as the Buddhists originally designed the fourth ashrama (the stage of life when one takes monastic vows) as a help in the determination of reality by undisturbed thinking. But in course of time, the Buddhist lamas, like the Hindu Sannyasins, forgot the ultimate objective and contented themselves with wandering along crooked and remote tracks leading nowhere, or still worse, vegetating like trees, moving along no path



Jivannukta

at all. The lamas of Khochranath were no exception. They led a life of routine penance, aiming at no life of thought. However, even for the performance of that penance, I honoured them; for they were not passing the time in total idleness, tree-like.

Khochranath is an important monastery, inhabited by about 200 lamas, all the year-round. Standing on a vast and lovely plain, to the left of the river Karnali which takes its source from the western shore of Lake Manasa, and is surrounded by snow-clad mountain chains on all sides, the monastery cannot fail to fascinate any aesthetic soul. At no great distance from that sacred spot, there was a beautiful village and there were also some green fields where a kind of pea was cultivated. It was, however, doubtful whether these objects added to the monastery's attractions or subtracted from them. My life at Chandanathji was disturbed



Jivannukta

by fever. I declined in health day by day. Yet the indisposition was not strong enough to shatter my resolve to proceed to Kailas. The deem and other devotees pressed me again and again to cancel my plan to visit Kailas that year, partly on the ground of my ill-health, and partly on account of their desire to spend more time in my company, but I declined to do so. In a week or two, I set out on the upward journey. I was accompanied by Anand-agiri and another Brahmin.

For our food on the journey, the people of Chandananath presented us with some sattu flour mixed with ghee and honey. The judge who was a keen devotee accompanied us some distance and before we parted made us a gift of money in the form of gold coins current in Nepal. I accepted it with thanks, not out of love for mon-



Jivannukta

ey, but out of regard for the feelings of the giver. On the orders of the judge, a young officer escorted us to the next village.

Ill as I was, I had now to encounter huge mountains, which held up their heads in impregnable grandeur. God alone was my help and relying solely upon Him, I began to ascend the mountains slowly. At nightfall, I reached a village after crossing a high mountain. The people of the village welcomed us and led us to the village temple, where they provided us with the best food and drink available in the village. From Khatmandu up to this point, some royal representative or other was accompanying us. But from now on we were travelling alone. However, we had no occasion to feel the absence of the royal representative.

The hospitable people of Nepal looked after us with great devotion. We passed several



Jivannukta

nights in wayside villages without any special discomfort. But on occasions, difficulties cropped up unexpectedly. More than once we slept in deep forests full of wild beasts. In those terrible forests, spreading for miles and miles around us and vibrant with the sound of cicalas, we passed our nights in vigil, gathering lots of firewood and keepingmg them blazing throughout the dark hours to scare away wild beasts.





STORY

Section

VAMANA AVATAR

Vamana avatar is a story of Lord Vishnu's incarnation. Lord Vishnu decided to be born as Aditi and Kashyap's son. The son was a dwarf or a Vamana. This was the Vamana avatara (dwarf incarnation) of Vishnu dashavatara which was taken to save Indra's kingdom. There was a king of the daityas named Bali. Bali was the grandson of Prahlada, the son of Hiranyakshyap. He was powerful and invincible. He was also righteous and truthful. The gods could not bear to see Bali's prosperity and



Vamana Avātara

began to plot how Bali might be foiled. So well did Bali rule that disease, drought and evil disappeared throughout the three worlds.

Bali had organised a horse sacrifice. Many sages came to the sacrifice and Shukracharya was the chief priest. The dwarf (Vamana) also arrived at yajna. Vamana Avatar is instantly recognizable with the short frame having a wooden umbrella.

Shukracharya, the guru of Daityas, realised that the dwarf was none other than Vishnu. He warned Bali not to promise anything to the Vamana (The Dwarf), who was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu (a dashavatara).

Bali replied that it would be his honour to serve Lord Vishnu. Bali went to the dwarf and asked what he had wanted. Vishnu expressed the wish that he might be given as much of land



Vamana Avātara

as might be covered in three of the dwarf's steps. This boon Bali readily granted. But no sooner than the boon had been granted, the dwarf adopted a gigantic form.

In two steps, the Dwarf covered the whole kingdom of Bali, from heaven to earth to nether world and demanded where he should place his third step. Bali offered himself. Vishnu was charmed at Bali's generosity. He then appointed Bali king of the underworld and Indra's kingdom was returned back to him.





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